

Journalism 635

Statehouse Reporting

Spring 2017

Professor:

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Office Hours: 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Friday

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Official course description: The purpose of this class is to provide students with an immersive public affairs reporting experience at the State Capital in Topeka while covering the important statewide issues of the day. Students will be assigned to cover the statehouse for specific media outlets and assist those media in fulfilling their public-service missions to their communities.

Unofficial course description: This is not a class; it's an adventure into the murky waters of Kansas politics. It's a front-row seat to a voter-approved freak show that allows you to build your portfolio, network for internships and jobs, and be completely entertained along the way.

Course Objectives

- To produce professional-level content for the KU Statehouse Wire Service
- To work independent in developing story ideas and producing stories
- To work with professional reporters and editors to develop stories
- To produce stories that build student portfolios for jobs and internships
- For students to produce stories they want to produce
- To assist students in earning internships and jobs

Expectations

- To produce two (2) stories from the Statehouse each week
- To develop four (2) enterprise stories during the semester (April)
- To produce the best journalism possible
- To work well with your reporters and editors
- To challenge yourself and challenge your colleagues
- To enhance your journalism skills (reporting, writing, networking, critical thinking) as you move toward graduation
- To professionally and ethically represent the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Grading

The grade is not important. At this stage of your college careers, grades are rudimentary measurements for the work you produce.

Nonetheless, I am obligated to issues grades. You will be graded on your ability to report, write, develop sources, meet deadlines and establish a working relationship with reporters and editors at your media outlet, who will provide input into your grade.

At the end of the semester, you will provide an online portfolio featuring your best work. Here is the standard grade scale:

Grading Scale

A-A- = 90% and above

B+-B- = 80% to 89%

C+-C- = 70% to 79%

D+- D- = 60% to 69%

F = Less than 60%

Failure to do the work, plagiarize or fabricate will result in an automatic “F” for the class and possible expulsion from the KU School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Two Stories Per Week

1. Attend a committee meeting
 - a. Interview sources from the meeting
 - b. Ask for contact information
 - c. Tell them you might be following up on a second story
2. Write an “evergreen” story about the issue
 - a. Conduct additional research
 - b. Contact previous sources about the issue
 - c. Contact additional sources about the issue

You will then produce one “event” story and one “evergreen” story. One will be done while at the Statehouse. The other will be completed without going to Topeka.

Professionalism

Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts, and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you’ll fail the course, and you might be expelled from or denied admission to the School of Journalism. **Treat this class like a job.**

Travel

Because you are required to travel to the Statehouse for this experience, you will be reimbursed for gas mileage and tolls. I strongly encourage carpooling.

Plagiarism

Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification

Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Students with Disabilities:

The KU office of Disability Resources coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. The office is located in 22 Strong Hall; the phone number is 785-864-2620 (V/TTY).

Information about services can be found at <http://disability.ku.edu>. Please also contact me privately in regard to your needs in this course.